

Salt & Light: Being Light

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Day One

Getting Started

Matthew 5:14-16 speaks of people praising God because of our good deeds. It may seem like the most obvious place to start applying this verse therefore is to go out and do something good. If you ask Google how to be the light of the world, it will tell you to go out and be kind and serve others. It will even tell you to have good ideas. Why didn't we think of that? The problem is that Jesus tells us that he is the vine and we are the branches, therefore we can do nothing apart from him. If we begin by going out to do good deeds we will be shining our own light to the praise of ourselves. We are reflecting the light of Christ, so we must absorb and reflect his light. How much time do you spend meditating on the gifts, blessings, and riches of Christ's grace versus the list of things you are supposed to do? I need to be a better husband, a better father, a better church member. I should work on my anger, my pride, my selfishness. I need to read the Bible more, pray more, and serve more. Focusing on these things is beginning at the end. These things are the results of your salvation, not the cause of it. The good works we do to the Father's glory are done in response to his love and grace. If you are not convinced of this love and grace, you will have no reservoir to draw from, no light to shine. Spend some time today meditating on God's many gifts to you, on the extravagance of his grace. Then see how his light shines through your life.

Verses: 2 Corinthians 12:9, Romans 6:14, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 4:16

Prayer Topics: Gratitude, Joy, Peace

Day 2

Light & Fruit

Light is difficult to describe. It exists as a wave and a particle, and both these "forms" have some very interesting and mysterious properties. One thing that light does is transfer energy. That becomes very important where life is concerned, because without the light we get from the sun, we would have no life on earth. The energy that is transferred to the plants through the sun's light allow it to grow and become fruitful, which in its turn allows other organisms to get energy and become fruitful themselves. The energy from the sun can also cause destruction, which is why many people have sun shades in their car that they put across the windshield. What determines whether the light brings life and fruitfulness or death and destruction? The determining factor is whether or not you have life in you. Things that are alive use the energy from the sun to grow, and things that are dead get destroyed by the sun. A live ant uses the sun to get bigger and reproduce, but the moment it dies the sun begins to break it down. Do you have life in you? Scripture tells us that we have been made alive in Christ Jesus even though we were dead in our transgressions. One way to tell if you are alive is your reaction to the light. Does the truth of God bring you joy and peace or anger and rejection? Those in the world who are dying react to the word of God by rejecting it or changing it. Those in the world who are living seek out exposure to the word of God like a plant that turns its leaves toward the sunlight, gaining strength and reproducing, bearing fruit one hundred fold. Spend some time in the light today, and live.

Verses: 1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 5:1-21, John 8:12-30

Prayer Topics: Growth, Strength, Nourishment

Day 3

Witness

Jesus puts the lamp on a stand so the whole room will have light. The city sits on a hill, not in the valley. Jesus intends for his work in our lives to be seen by the world, so that the world may come to know him. We are to be his witnesses in the world. When my boys were young, they had occasion to take the witness stand at a trial. It was very anxiety inducing for them, and their attorney prepared them for the event by telling them to tell just what they knew, speaking only to what they witnessed. They were not to draw conclusions or to try to convince the jury, that was his job as the attorney. My sons took this to heart, and even corrected the opposing attorney when they tried to get more out of them than a witness of the events. What has Christ done for you? How would your life be different if you were not a Christian? If there has been no change, perhaps you are not following him. Often we are tempted to follow comfort, or the culture, or our own dispositions rather than following Christ. We are tempted to adorn this with religious sounding words to hide our lack of discipleship from ourselves and others. Other times we follow Christ, but we fail to be a witness because we put the pressure of conviction on ourselves, when that is the work of the Spirit. Don't hide your light under a bushel, instead be a witness of what God has done in your life.

Verses: Matthew 5:16, Matthew 18:16, 1 Peter 3:15

Prayer Topics: Testimony, Truth, Gratitude

Day 4

Light & Darkness

If you have ever been on a cave tour, you probably experienced the part of the tour where they turn off the lights. There is no darkness as complete that you will ever experience as being in a cave with no source of light. You can put your hand right in front of your face and see nothing. Imagine exploring a cave and having your only source of light stop working. What a terrifying experience that would be, and then imagine how thankful you would be for even the smallest source of light. As Christians, our purpose is to provide light to the world, and that means going out into the darkness. I was recently listening to the testimony of a person who was very deep in

occult practices, who was given a little tract. If you grew up in the 80s, you can probably remember the little evangelism tracts that were popular at the time. They always came across as being kind of silly and cheesy, but they led this person who was about as far from Christ as you can imagine to salvation. I have heard many people who were far from Jesus tell their stories of finding him, and all of them have in common the fact that they felt lost and in the dark. They knew their lives were empty, but they could not find the answer to that emptiness. We often think that those around us are happy and content, completely unaware of the darkness that many find themselves lost in. These are the people we should be around, and often the only way to know if someone is lost in the dark is to ask. A simple invitation to church, a simple word about your relationship with Christ may be all that is necessary to bring the light into someone's life. Be an effective light. Find a dark place to shine.

Verses: Matthew 5:14, Psalm 119:130, 2 Corinthians 4:6

Prayer Topics: Relationships, Presence, Influence

Day 5

Being Light

The course of action today is simple. Read 1 Corinthians 13 a couple of times and consider how this relates to being light. How would acting in a way consistent with this chapter be light? Who would it be light to? What would be the most challenging part of this chapter to embody? How could you live out the principles of this chapter at home to your family? At work to your coworkers? To customers or clients? Would it make you better at business or worse? What conflicts would arise in each setting trying to live these principles out? How would making a greater effort to be more loving in all the areas of your life be light to you? What would you learn? How would you change?

Prayer Topics: Hope, Radiance, Love, Peace